



## FOREST CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 28, 2017

The Honorable Roger Berliner  
Montgomery County Council President  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Berliner,

County Executive Leggett's proposed FY18 budget reduces the Department of Transportation (MCDOT) tree maintenance budget by almost \$500,000. The Forest Conservation Advisory Committee urges the County Council to 1) restore those funds; 2) increase funding to both MCDOT and the Montgomery Parks to manage emerald ash borer (EAB) impact; and 3) increase to both the DOT street tree maintenance program and Montgomery Parks' replanting programs.

As you know, the emerald ash borer is destroying thousands of ash trees in the region. MCDOT estimates there are 7,100 ash trees to be removed along rights-of-way around the County. It is especially urgent this year given that Montgomery County is approaching the projected peak of tree failure over the next two to three years.

The Council must increase funds to remove hazardous infected ash trees and replant other native shade species both in the rights-of-way and in our parks. Montgomery Parks, focusing on parkways and trails, must remove at least 2,050 more ash trees. Montgomery Parks has already spent tens of thousands of dollars to remove numerous infested ash trees along Beach Drive. This is only the beginning of the necessary ash tree damage response. The funds cut by the proposed budget will effectively put a major roadblock in this process. If the work is not done, County residents will be exposed to the risk of a significant number of dead/dying trees along the highways and in the parks of Montgomery County.

Our County's trees are valuable resources for their carbon sequestration, stormwater management, roadway surface preservation, and cooling temperatures. They provide countless mental health, economic, ecological and aesthetic benefits to those who frequent and inhabit our business districts, neighborhoods, and parks. Last but not least, trees increase property values and contribute greatly to the overall attractiveness and livability of our communities.

Mr. Berliner  
April 28, 2017  
Page 2

Thank you for addressing FY18 funding for MCDOT and Montgomery Parks tree maintenance and replanting programs, and continuing to support our urban forest.

Sincerely,

Jean Cavanaugh, Chair  
Montgomery County  
Forest Conservation  
Advisory Committee

cc: Hans Riemer, Vice President, Montgomery County Council  
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Council  
Nancy Floreen, Montgomery County Council  
Tom Hucker, Montgomery County Council  
Sidney Katz, Montgomery County Council  
George Leventhal, Montgomery County Council  
Nancy Navarro, Montgomery County Council  
Craig Rice, Montgomery County Council  
Al Roshdieh, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board  
Mike Riley, Director, Montgomery Parks